



**Metropolitan King County Council  
Utilities Committee**

**STAFF REPORT**

**Agenda Item:** 4

**Name:** Megan Smith

**Proposed No.:** 2002-0309

**Date:** July 9, 2002

**Attending:** Dave Clark, Manager, Rivers Section, Water and Land Resources Division (WLRD)  
Tom Bean, Senior Engineer, Rivers Section, WLRD

**SUBJECT:** Motion authorizing the executive to enter into agreements with the United States Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) and the City of Snoqualmie for cost sharing and local sponsorship of a flood hazard reduction project that would have impacts in and around the City of Snoqualmie.

**BACKGROUND:**

Flood History

The City of Snoqualmie has the highest concentration of flood-prone homes in King County, and the highest number of past flood insurance claims in the State of Washington. The Corps estimates annualized flood damages in the city at more than \$1.6 million per year, and has identified 652 flood-prone structures. In November 1990, more than two-thirds of the residences in the City of Snoqualmie were flooded. Since then, the city, county, and local residents have taken steps to reduce flood damages in and around the City of Snoqualmie. Numerous homes have been removed from flood prone areas or elevated above the depth of floodwaters. King County and the City of Snoqualmie have adopted additional restrictions on development in the floodplain and floodway. Even with these changes, numerous residences, businesses, and critical facilities in and around the City of Snoqualmie are still at risk to flooding.

Flood depths in and around the City of Snoqualmie are heavily influenced by the narrow river channel immediately upstream of Snoqualmie Falls. Therefore, the proposed flood hazard reduction project focuses on widening the two narrowest portions of this quarter mile length in order to reduce the depth floodwaters upstream.

Role of King County in Flood Hazard Reduction

Counties are authorized by state law (RCW 86.12) to undertake activities to control floodwaters, to establish a tax levy to create a River Improvement Fund, and to prepare comprehensive flood control management plans. King County has historically provided flood hazard reduction services in using revenues from a River Improvement Fund tax levy. This levy is collected in both unincorporated King County and cities.

### Scope of Proposed Flood Hazard Reduction Project

The proposed project includes three major elements:

- Blasting of bedrock and excavation of material on the north bank of the Snoqualmie River,
- Excavation of material on the south bank,
- Removal of a failing railroad bridge.

The project also includes two mitigation elements: a "Downstream Mitigation Program," which would provide \$328,500 in cost-sharing assistance for downstream residents, and fish habitat improvements in the excavated areas.

### Project Costs

The current cost estimate is \$3.83 million. Local sponsors are required to provide a minimum non-federal match of 35%. According to the transmittal letter for Motion 2002-0309, the Corps would contribute \$2.22 million, King County would contribute \$894,000, and the city would contribute \$717,000. The 2002 adopted budget WLRD CIP budget includes \$770,000 from the River Improvement Fund. An additional \$165,000 will be proposed in the 2003 budget (includes \$41,000 for contingency).

### Anticipated Project Benefits

These measures are projected to reduce flood depths during a 100-year (the size of flood with a 1% probability of occurring within each year, and the size used for mapping and regulating flood hazard areas) by 1.2 feet in the City of Snoqualmie. This equates to a projected reduction in average annual flooding costs of \$837,000 per year.

### Downstream Impacts

This project is anticipated to have downstream impacts. According to information provided by WLRD, the Corps estimates that downstream flood depths would increase by no more than 0.1 feet (slightly more than one inch). This estimate is for the area immediately downstream of the project, relates to a 100-year flood. Project impacts are projected to diminish with distance downstream and would lessen with the size of the flood. Northwest Hydraulic Consultants has conducted an independent review of the Corps' impact modeling. The conclusion of this review was that downstream impacts may be somewhat less than .1 foot in a 100-year flood.

### Environmental Review

The Corps completed National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) review in 1999. Consultations with the United States Fish and Wildlife Service and National Marine Fisheries Service have been completed as required under Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act. Local environmental and permit reviews (Shorelines, Sensitive Areas, etc.) are under the jurisdiction of the City of Snoqualmie. A Hydraulic Project Approval and Temporary Water Quality Modification Certification still need to be acquired.

### Time Sensitivity

The federal share for this project has been allocated as part of the Fiscal Year 2002 federal budget. The Corps has indicated that this funding could be at risk if a Project Cooperation Agreement is not executed prior to the end of the Fiscal Year (September 20, 2002).

### Impact of Proposed Motion 2002-0309

Proposed Motion 2002-0309 would authorize the Executive to enter into two agreements:

(1) A Project Cooperation Agreement (PCA) with the Corps of Engineers

The PCA outlines the roles and responsibilities of the Corps of Engineers and King County as the non-federal sponsor. Under the terms of the agreement, a non-federal share of at least 35% of total project costs is required. The PCA includes an estimate of total project cost, and notes that if cumulative financial obligations for construction would exceed that amount, then award of construction contracts would be deferred until the Corps and the non-federal sponsor agree to proceed. The non-federal share would still be a minimum of 35% if project costs exceed the estimate in the PCA. Under the PCA, the non-federal sponsor shall operate, maintain, repair, replace, and rehabilitate the project.

(2) An Interlocal Agreement (ILA) with the City of Snoqualmie

The ILA with the City of Snoqualmie designates King County as the local sponsor for the purposes of executing the PCA with the Corps. The ILA designates King County and the City of Snoqualmie as joint local sponsors for purposes other than signing the agreement. The ILA would require the city and county to each contribute 50% of the local match. The county would administer the downstream mitigation fund referred to in the PCA.

The executive's transmittal letter notes that the Corps, the county, and the city are developing a Project Management Plan that would better clarify working relationships among the parties during the contracting and construction process (e.g., how would changes in project scope or design be handled?). This is particularly important given that the local sponsors are responsible for a minimum of 35% of the total project costs and for future maintenance.

Today's briefing will provide context for consideration of the proposed motion and draft agreements with the City of Snoqualmie and Corps of Engineers. Staff from WLRD will provide information on past flood damages in and around the City of Snoqualmie, the scope of the proposed project, projected benefits and impacts, and cost-shares. Given the complexity of these agreements, additional legal review and staff analysis of these agreements is recommended.

### **ATTACHMENTS:**

1. Proposed Motion 2002-0309 without attachments
2. Transmittal letter dated July 2, 2002
3. Interlocal Agreement between King County and the City of Snoqualmie for cost sharing of Corps Section 205 Snoqualmie River Flood Control Project
4. Draft Project Cooperation Agreement between the Department of the Army and King County, Washington for construction of the Snoqualmie River Section 205 Flood Damage Reduction Project.